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A Note From Yvonne M. Smith ND Vocational Rehabilitation Director

Welcome to Vocational Rehabilitation!

The staff of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation are committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment potential and options. We understand that the uncertainty of knowing where to turn for assistance in either finding employment or maintaining a current job can be frustrating. If you are found eligible for VR services, we can help you determine the career path that is right for you, based on your strengths, interests and abilities.

The VR Client "Toolkit" was created to present you with a description of the vocational rehabilitation process. I urge you to read it carefully so that you understand what VR can and cannot do for you. As you read the information or review it with your VR counselor, be sure to ask questions. This will help you understand your rights and your responsibilities in the rehabilitation process.

This packet contains an overview of the entire VR process, from application to post-employment services. It contains all the forms you will need to complete in the application process, such as personal data forms and release of information forms. It also contains supplemental information on programs like the Client Assistance Program, assistive technology, and other services that may prove helpful to you in reaching your goals.

I encourage you to be positive throughout this process. VR will work with you to help you reach your goals, but ultimately, you hold the key to success. If you are willing to give it a 100% effort, you will discover a whole new world of employment opportunities available to you.

Please accept my best wishes. May all your hopes and dreams become a reality.

Respectfully,

Yvonne M. Smith
Director
ND Vocational Rehabilitation

STOP! READ CAREFULLY

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is here for you if. . .

- You have a medically documented disability that is making it hard for you to get or continue in work.
- You need some specific services to get into work.
- You want to work to the best of your capacity.
- You are ready to make some good choices to get your life moving in the right direction.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is not the place you are looking for if...

- You don't have a disability.
- You don't want to work.
- You want VR to help you get disability exemption.
- You came here to get other services like food stamps.
- You are being forced to be here and you do not want to be here.
- You are not ready to move on toward employment that is right for you.

VR can help you find out what your interests and abilities are so you can determine a career path.

VR can help you figure out what barriers to employment you may have.

VR can help you find out how to change or minimize the barriers that are keeping you from employment.

VR can help you figure out what services you need to get into employment and how to obtain those services.

READ CAREFULLY



The Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Process

Intake & Application for Services

People who apply, or are referred to VR must complete an intake and application for services.

Eligibility Process

Once you have completed the intake process and application, your case will be opened. Your assigned counselor has up to **60 DAYS** from the date VR receives your application to determine if you are eligible for VR services.

People who are eligible for services are those who:

- have physical or mental impairment
- have a substantial impediment to employment
- require VR services to become employed

People receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who want to work are presumed eligible for VR services.

Comprehensive Assessment

During this step you may be asked to:

- complete interest inventories
- conduct labor market research
- complete further evaluations to determine what profession best suits your interest and abilities

Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

Once eligible for services, you and your counselor will prepare an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

The plan will include:

- your vocational goal
- counseling and guidance activities
- specific services that will be provided
- your responsibilities
- financial participants
- job placement activities

Services

Vocational Rehabilitation services may include:

- on-the-job training
- job-search assistance
- education/training
- books, supplies, tools
- transportation
- assistive technology
- other necessary services

Job Placement & Successful Employment

When you reach your employment goal and have been working at least 90 days, you will be considered successfully employed and VR will close your file.

Post-Employment Services

Post employment services may be provided after your VR file has been closed to help you maintain a job, if appropriate.

STEP 1

Intake and Application for Services

At your first meeting, your VR counselor will talk with you about:

- Your disability and medical history.
- Your barriers to employment.
- Your employment history.
- Your educational history.
- Your hopes and dreams for the future.
- What services you think you might need to get into, or stay in employment.
- Information about your family, your finances, etc., in order to get a good picture of what you need from us.
- What services we have and what VR is all about.

You can apply for services in the office with the counselor's assistance or you can take the information home to think about it and complete the application yourself.

If you want to apply for services, VR will:

- If needed, ask you to sign release of information forms so that information can be obtained from doctors, schools, and other relevant contacts to determine your eligibility.
- If needed, set up appointments with doctors, psychologists, or for evaluations to help us know more about your ability and also about your disabilities.
- Pay for any appointments that we arrange for or with you.

It is your responsibility to attend the appointments or to call us if there is a good reason that you cannot attend so the appointment can be rescheduled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES
ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LEGAL SERVICES
SPN 200 (REV. 01-2003)

Name: _____
I acknowledge that I have received the Data Privacy Notice and understand the rights I have in my information about this Department's information practices.

Signature: _____

SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION
ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SPN 200 (REV. 01-2003)

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE): _____
MY DISABILITY IS: _____
I HEARD ABOUT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FROM: _____

I am requesting service intend to become informed about changes in my relationship.

I authorize VR to gather for services, identify app information about me is decisions about my elig be released by VR upon law.

I understand that I can't sex, political beliefs, ag matter related to the rec VR program.

The services of the Clie and I have also received

I understand that if I an request mediation servi Client Assistance Progi hearing, I will write to: A Capitol, 600 East Boule hearing must be made w

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____
SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GU: _____

PERSONAL DATA FORM
ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
SPN 81 (REV. 04-01)

Name: _____ Maiden/Other Name: _____
Address 1: _____
Address 2: _____
City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Country of Residence: _____ Telephone Number: _____
Social Security No: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____ Male _____ Female _____
Race/Ethnicity (Select all that apply):
____ White/Caucasian
____ Black/African American
____ American Indian or Alaska Native
____ Asian
____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
____ Hispanic or Latino
____ Other _____
Highest Level of Education Attained (Select one):
____ No formal schooling [0]
____ Elementary education (grades 1 - 8) [1]
____ Secondary education, no high school diploma (Grades 9-12) [2]
____ Special education certificate of completion/attendance [3]
____ High school graduate or equivalence certificate (GED) (regular education students) [4]
____ Post-secondary education, no degree [5]
____ Associate degree or Vocational/Technical Certificate [6]
____ Bachelor's degree [7]
____ Master's degree or higher [8]
Have you ever received services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
____ Yes _____ No
Number of Dependents (Do not count yourself): _____
For Office Use Only:
Referral Date: _____
Counselor: _____
Disability at Referral: _____
If selected,
Hours worked last week: _____
If Hours entered,
Earnings last week: \$ _____

COPY TO APPLICANT

ND Vocational Rehabilitation: Services to Individuals with Disabilities: Services: Department of Human Services: State of North Dakota
http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/services/disabilities/vr/

North Dakota
ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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ND Vocational Rehabilitation

Services include (but are NOT limited to):

- Diagnosis and evaluation
- Vocational counseling and planning
- Information and referral
- Adaptive equipment
- Physical and mental restoration services
- Employment maintenance
- Transportation
- Vocational training including supported employment
- Job placement and follow-up

Supported Employment provides training for individuals with significant disabilities who, because of the severity of their physical or mental impairments, have never been employed or have a history of sporadic employment. Individuals served by this program need ongoing intervention on or off the job in order to maintain employment. A job coach or employment specialist within private, nonprofit agencies generally provide intervention.

Within the program services:

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors determine eligibility based on the following elements:

- The individual must have a physical or mental impairment
- The physical or mental impairment must affect the individual's ability to obtain or maintain employment
- The individual must require Vocational Rehabilitation services

Forms used in the application process may be downloaded from the DHS website at www.nd.gov/humanservices/services/disabilities/vr

STEP 2

Eligibility Process

Once you have completed the intake process, your case will be opened. Your assigned counselor has up to 60 DAYS from the date VR receives your application for services to determine if you are eligible.

VR will pay for any appointments that we ask you to attend. It is your responsibility to attend the appointments or to call us if there is a good reason that you cannot attend so the appointment can be rescheduled.

People who are eligible for services are those who:

- have a physical or mental impairment;
- have a substantial impediment to employment; and
- require vocational rehabilitation services to become employed.

People receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who want to work are presumed eligible for VR services.

If VR notifies you that you are not eligible, you have the right to appeal



STEP 2

STEP 3

Comprehensive Assessment

You are about to participate in a program that can change your life. What you get out of it depends on what you put into it. VR is a partnership between you and your counselor.

The first thing you and your counselor will do is talk about:

- all your strengths, interests, abilities
- the job market you are looking at,
- training programs and what is needed to get into them.
- choices you have, what barriers you have and how to work around them.

During this step you may be asked to:

- complete interest inventories;
- conduct labor market research; or
- complete further evaluations to determine what profession best suits your interest and abilities.

STEP 4

Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

EMPLOYMENT PLAN
ND Department of Human Services/VR
SPN 9116 (Rev. 03/2004)
• Electronic Copy

Name: _____

This is a plan which outlines steps for me to reach my employment goal. It has to be reviewed at least once a year. However, my counselor and I can review and change it at any time. Goods and services listed in this plan will be provided in the most integrated setting.

I will be notified if this plan has to be changed or suspended due to such things as availability of funds, time changes, availability of services or any other reason.

My choice for an employment goal is:

I chose this goal because:

VR services are built around **INFORMED CHOICE**. You and your counselor will discuss a great deal of information and a number of options. Working together, a career path will be identified that reflects your strengths, interests, and abilities.

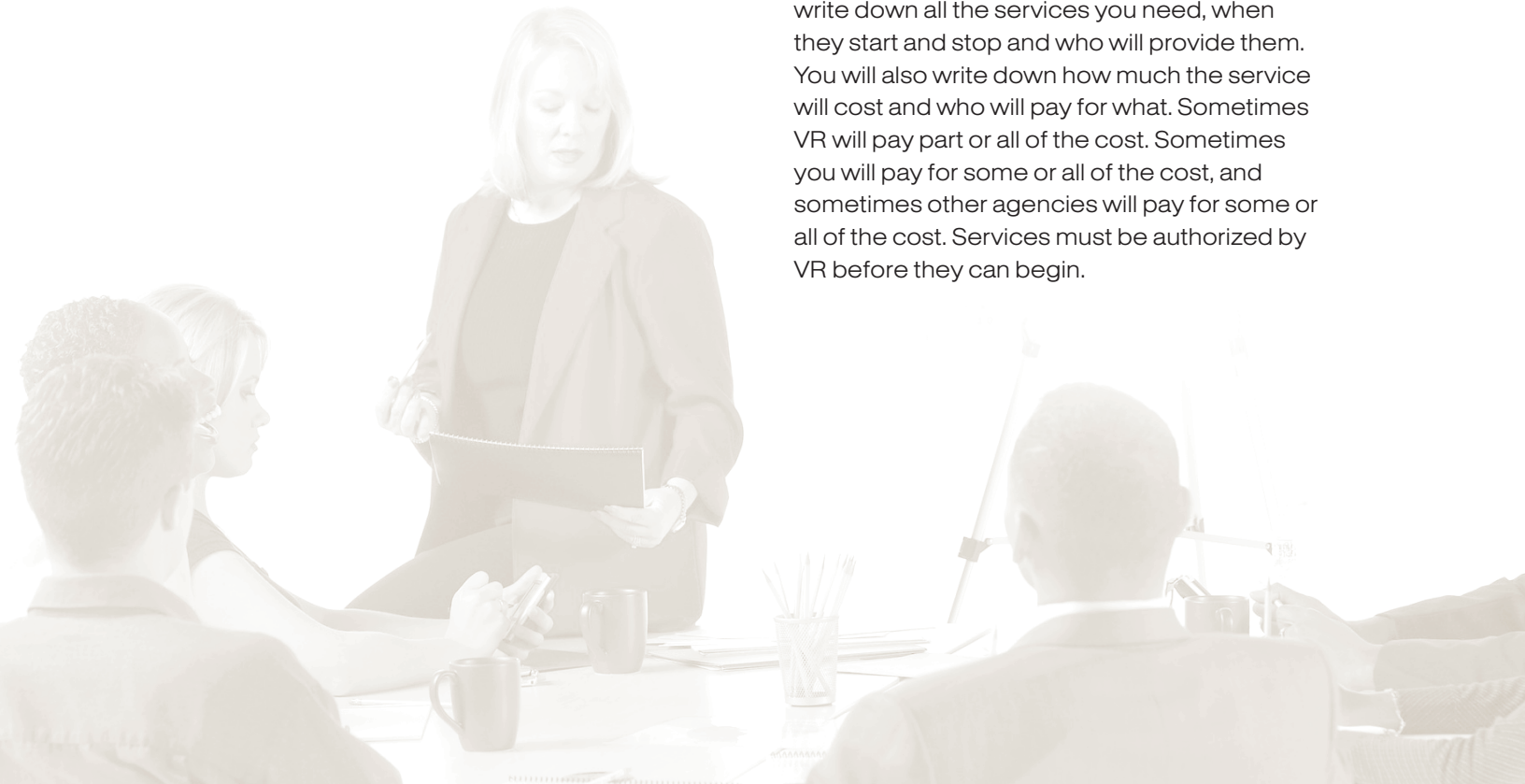
You and your counselor will then write an **Individual Plan for Employment, or IPE**. The first question on the plan is, "What job goal do you want to work towards?" Your plan should be based on your interests, abilities, skills, and job market area.

It is important that you stay in touch with your counselor so they know when something happens that might change the course of your IPE. Your IPE will work more effectively the more you communicate with each other.

If your VR counselor doesn't think you can do that job, or get a job in the area in which you want to live, then you and your counselor need to talk more because you both must agree that the goal is right for you and achievable in the current job market.

Dispute resolution, mediation, and information are available to you through the **CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**, if you and your counselor cannot reach an agreement.

You and your counselor **will plan the steps you need to take to reach your job goal**. You will write down all the services you need, when they start and stop and who will provide them. You will also write down how much the service will cost and who will pay for what. Sometimes VR will pay part or all of the cost. Sometimes you will pay for some or all of the cost, and sometimes other agencies will pay for some or all of the cost. Services must be authorized by VR before they can begin.



STEP 5

Services

VR offers many types of services. Your plan is customized to suit your needs and abilities. The services that go on your IPE are what you need to achieve your employment goal. VR does not take a “cookie cutter” approach to services.

Someone else may receive a service that you will not. Your counselor will work with you to figure out what services are specific to your needs. If you think YOU need something, be sure and ask! If VR can help, we will, or we will explain why not.

COLLEGE OR VO-TECH EDUCATION

You and your counselor will talk about your abilities in an effort to determine if college or vocational-technical, or vo-tech school is right for you. If so, you will work together to determine what you want to learn and what colleges offer the type of program you are seeking.

WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR VO-TECH SCHOOL, IT IS IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT:

- How long you can afford to stay out of the work force.
- How you will invest in the program yourself.
- What your abilities say about your chances to succeed in college.
- What services are available at college to help you succeed despite your disability?
- If you are willing to move in order to attend college or get work after college.
- How supportive your family is about you attending college.
- How committed you will be in terms of time to spend succeeding in college.
- Will this type of learning get you what you really want?
- Will there be jobs in the field you want and in the location you want?

IF IT LOOKS LIKE COLLEGE OR VO-TECH IS A GOOD OPTION FOR YOU, HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Apply for admission.
- Apply for financial aid. (VR is unable to determine what we can help you with until the college gives you a financial aid award letter.)
- Meet with the school to determine what their placement rate is in the field you are interested in.
- Meet with the school to talk with Student Services if you need accommodations in the classroom.
- Let VR know of your admission status.
- Bring in your financial aid award letter as soon as you get it.
- Meet with your VR counselor to determine what VR can assist with.



TRAINING



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU WITH THE EXPENSE OF COLLEGE OR VO-TECH PROGRAMS IF:

- You are in default of a past student loan until you have made arrangements to repay and have shown good-faith effort to remove the default.
- You have no “unmet financial need” based on the information provided by the schools. (If you are under 24, you are most likely going to be determined a “dependent student” and your parents’ income will be counted.)
- You have not maintained an agreed-upon grade point average that meets the schools requirement each semester or,
- You have dropped out of school. You may have to complete a semester at your own expense to show your good-faith effort to complete school.

ON THE JOB TRAINING

COLLEGE OR VO-TECH IS NOT FOR EVERYONE. SOME PEOPLE:

- Do not have the time.
- Don’t want to attend college or vo-tech.
- Learn better in other ways.
- Find it difficult to attend college because of family or other obligations.

It is also important to know that some jobs will not require a college or vo-tech degree. Your counselor can work with you to find out if there is a better way to learn skills to become employed such as:

- On-the-job training.
- Seminars or class training.
- Working with the Adult Learning Center to improve on some skills in a less stressful way.
- Working one-on-one with a trainer to learn a special skill are options available to you.

JOB ACCOMMODATIONS

VR can help you determine if there are special accommodations you need to find or keep your current job should you have or incur a disability. Perhaps you are having problems learning the job, learning new job-related tasks, or a new disability is making your job difficult. You and your counselor can discuss what problems you are having and what to do about it. Some of the things that we can look at providing are:

- Job coaching, if you are having problems learning your job or learning new things on your job.
- Assistive technology, such as magnifiers, hearing aids, different computer screens that might make your job easier.
- Scooters or stools that might make it easier for you to get around at your job.
- On-the-job training for your employer to help you learn new skills for a different job if you can no longer do the one that you used to do.
- Working with your employer to figure out what will work best for both of you on the job.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment may be a good option for you. There are many things to think about before choosing this option. You and your

counselor can discuss all the pros and cons of self-employment in-depth. Here are some things you need to think about:

- What skills do I have?
- What services do I provide?
- What is the competition in this location?
- How much money do I have to invest in this business?
- Will I be able to do this with my disability?
- Is my family supportive?
- What business experience do I have?
- How is my credit?

If you decide you want to pursue self-employment, you will have a lot of work to do! You will be:

- Given or shown a self-employment CD entitled “PLANNING FOR SUCCESS” to help you clearly understand the challenges of self-employment.
- Referred to places like the Small Business Administration to assist you in the planning necessary to obtain financing and find business success.
- Asked to meet with your counselor and one other counselor to do a Business Assessment Scale, or BAS, which points out the possibilities of the business succeeding. The BAS also points out areas in which you may need additional training before opening a small business.



The “Planning For Success” CD will help you understand the challenges of self-employment.



This option will take a lot of time, commitment, personal energy and finances, on your part. But, if you and your counselor feel it is the right option, VR will do everything we can to help you succeed. VR financial assistance is never guaranteed and depends on the nature of the business, what you have done to invest in yourself, and what other funds are available to you.

HOME-BASED EMPLOYMENT

This is also a possibility. There are a few options that you may have. Some are not financially rewarding, such as constructing crafts for other companies. Others earn more income but may require certain skills just like jobs outside of your home. One option is home-based medical transcriptions, for example. You have to be a very fast typist and be very disciplined to do the work. Home-based business is not a good option if you do not have family support, if you do not have the discipline to make yourself work at specific hours, or, if you have distractions at home such as small children.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

For people who have very severe barriers to employment because of their disability, we have a program called Supported Employment. This program is more intense in their direct work with people who need it. It also is for people who need a lot of help getting a job, learning a job and remaining on the job. After people go through this program, they receive life-long support from other agencies to remain on the job.

HOME-BASED EMPLOYMENT



STEP 6

Job Placement and Successful Employment

When you are ready to work, VR will assist you in finding a job in the manner that works best for you. Some people prefer to conduct job searches and applications on their own, others may ask for the counselors help.

Some of the ways VR can help include:

- Developing resumes,
- Preparation for interviews, and
- Making referrals to employers.

At your request, VR can also make direct contact with employers to discuss employment-related issues.

When you are working in the job you selected on your IPE, or one that is closely related to it, VR will keep your file open for at least 90 days. Then, before closing the VR file, both you and your counselor must agree that everything is satisfactory and that you are doing well in your job.



STEP 7

Post-Employment Services

Post employment services may be provided after your file is closed if you need short-term assistance with your employment. Be sure to call your counselor if you think you might need these services.



Resolving Issues and Concerns

You are applying for services under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. As part of the application process you are being informed about help available to you through the North Dakota Client Assistance Program.

The Client Assistance Program is available to assist and advocate for you whenever you are dissatisfied with any action or inaction on the part of VR or other programs you are working with. You may request help from the Client Assistance Program at any time. Call if you have questions, concerns, or problems with your eligibility or with services you would like or are receiving.

If you call, the Client Assistance Program will work with you to resolve your problem. Client Assistance will offer advice and provide you with help. Should it be necessary, the Client Assistance Program can also assist you with mediation or a Fair Hearing. The Client Assistance Program can be reached at:

North Dakota Client Assistance Program
1237 West Divide Avenue, Suite 3
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-1208
Toll Free: 1-800-207-6122
701-328-8947
TDD 701-328-8968



Visit ND CAP at www.nd.gov/cap/



Client Rights and Responsibilities

As a client of Vocational Rehabilitation you have a number of rights and responsibilities. Following is a description of your key rights and responsibilities followed by a brief discussion in some instances.

You have the **right to be treated with courtesy and respect**. In return, VR asks that you extend that same courtesy and respect to others.

You have the **right to services without discrimination** on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. You will not be discriminated against in any matter related to receiving a service, financial assistance or other assistance under the VR program.

You have the **right for your case file information to remain confidential**.

- Your records will not be shared without your permission. If VR needs medical or other information, we will ask you to sign a release form so we can get that information. If you are eighteen years old or older and you want someone from your family to be able to talk with your VR counselor, you will need to sign a release for that family member.
- You have a **responsibility to inform** your VR counselor about other agencies or programs you have worked with who may have information that would be helpful in planning your services, and to sign a release of information form so VR can contact them.

You have both the **right and the responsibility to participate in the planning and development of your vocational goal and rehabilitation services**. It is important that you make your desires known and that you talk with your counselor anytime you think your program needs changing.

You have the **right to make informed choices** regarding your employment goal and services. You also have the **responsibility to discuss the pros and cons of your choices** and to come to an agreement with your VR counselor about the services you will receive.

You have the **right to timely services** needed to achieve your employment goal.

- To help in receiving timely services, you have a **responsibility to stay in touch with your VR counselor, keep appointments and follow through on your IPE**. It is also important to report any changes in address, telephone number, medical condition or other major changes affecting you.

You have the **right to mediate or appeal any decision** made by VR that you disagree with.

You have the **right to work with the Client Assistance Program (CAP)** if you need information or help to resolve any issue or a concern you may have.

- If you think you might want to work with CAP, it will be your **responsibility to contact** them. CAP contact information is on page 12 of this handbook.

You have the **right to review** information in your case file.

- If you wish to review your case file, it is **your responsibility to give VR advance notice** so we can have the information ready for you.

You have the right to **request a different counselor**.

Before requesting a change in VR counselors, you have a **responsibility to attempt to work out any differences** between you and your counselor. However, if that fails, please talk to the counselor's supervisor about the difficulty you are having and your desire to change counselors.

You have the **right to be consulted** before your VR file is closed.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that my VR counselor and I have reviewed my rights and responsibilities under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. I understand these rights and responsibilities and agree to abide by them.

I also understand that I am entitled to work with the North Dakota Client Assistance Program (CAP) should a disagreement concerning services arise between my VR counselor and me.

Signature

Date

VR Counselor Signature

Date

Scheduler

Date of Visit	Counselor/Client Activities	Comments	Next Appointment

Scheduler

Date of Visit	Counselor/Client Activities	Comments	Next Appointment